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The Certainty of Divine Revelation.

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A  
S E R M O N

Preached at

St. Martins in the Fields, Feb. 4. 169<sup>t</sup>.

BEING THE

Second of the L E C T U R E

For the Ensuing Y E A R,

Founded by the Honourable

ROBERT BOYLE, Esquire.

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By JOHN WILLIAMS, D. D.

Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

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The Second Edition Corrected.

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L O N D O N :

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all due care taken by god y<sup>e</sup> his revelation shou<sup>d</sup> not be lost or corrupted p. 10. w<sup>h</sup>ch speech, & natural impressions, with y<sup>e</sup> sense of em<sup>ph</sup> of divine infusion necessarily; ergo, equivalent to revelation p. 14. 16. &c.

no foundation in reason for y<sup>e</sup> traditionaly solemnization of y<sup>e</sup> <sup>week, or</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> day, or y<sup>e</sup> use of expiatory sacrifices; ergo of divine institution most probably p. 24. 28. prophecies, matter of revelation, yet acknowledged p. 35. 6.

- p. 25. y<sup>e</sup> place cited out of Euseb: proper: 13. 12 shows y<sup>e</sup> antients learned heathen, as early as Plato & Pythagoras read y<sup>e</sup> Hebrew books, long before y<sup>e</sup> LXX translation.
26. l. 6. it does appears y<sup>t</sup> sacrifices expiatory were so very early & of general use.

BY JOHN WILLIAMS, D.D.

THE SECOND EDITION CORRECTED



H E B. I. 1, 2.

God who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake in time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.



N which Words I have observed there is,

I. A Description given of Revelation, 'tis God's speaking, and declaring his Will to Persons chosen for that purpose.

II. The Certainty of it; 'tis by way of Declaration, and taken for granted, God who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake, &c.

III. The Order observed in delivering this Revelation; it was at sundry times, and in divers manners: In time past by the Prophets, and in the last days by his Son. It was *πολυμερῶς*, in parts, and in several Periods and Manifestations; and *πολυτροπῶς*, by Illapses, Visions, &c.

IV. The Perfection and Conclusion of all,

'tis in the last days by his Son ; the Heir of all things, &c.

Under the first I have shewed,

1. What we mean by Revelation, in contradistinction to Natural Light.
2. The Possibility of it.
3. The Expedience, Usefulness, and Necessity of it.

It is the Second I am to proceed to, viz. The Certainty.

Under which I shall shew,

I. That God has reveal'd himself ; or that there has been such Revelation.

II. The Difference between Pretended and Real Revelation.

III. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain such a Revelation, and have upon them all the Characters necessary and belonging to such Revelation.

I. That there has been a Divine Revelation;

What I have principally in my eye, is the Proof of the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures ; but for the present I shall lay that aside, and take my rise towards it from such general Principles and Observations as are founded upon

Reason ;



Reason ; or such particular Instances and Matters of Fact as manifestly proceeded from Revelation.

And accordingly I shall dispose of what I have to say in Proof of it, under these Four Heads ; as we have for it,

1. A Rational or Moral Evidence.
2. A Natural.
3. A Traditionary, or Testimony.
4. A Supernatural.

*First*, Moral : Where in the first place I take for granted what I have before proved, *viz.* That a Divine Revelation is Expedient, Useful, and Necessary ; and upon that Supposition shall attempt to prove the *Certainty* of it.

I acknowledge, where the Necessity is created by our own fault, there lies no obligation upon the Creator to provide a Remedy ; and since the Necessity Mankind is now in, proceeded from their Apostacy, that Necessity can in reason be no just Plea for it, nor a sufficient Excuse in the want of it. When Man was created in such a state as made Revelation a necessary Help to his Reason, God immediately afforded him such an extraordinary Manifestation of himself : But when he forfeited that Divine Gift, he could have no allowable Right or Claim to it ; For to  
*him*.

him that hath, and improves what he hath, *shall* be given; but to him that hath not, and takes no care to preserve and improve it, may justly be denied what was otherwise fit and necessary for him to have.

This indeed is the Case, if rigorously stated; but considering the miserable Circumstances Mankind were in after the Fall, more especially through want of a Revelation, we may reasonably conclude, That the Goodness of God would no less incline him to give it, than if he had been obliged to it by a special Grant, Promise, or Covenant. Decrees are Secrets lock'd up in the Breast of Almighty God; and whatever Good is therein intended, how beneficial soever they may be in the Event, yet afford no Satisfaction to us, till they are opened and revealed: And though the Redemption of Mankind were decreed, and were according to Circumstances to operate, and in due season to be fully executed, yet what would They have been the better, if for 4000 Years together that Decree had lay hid in the Bosom of the Father, and the Decree had never been a Promise, and that Promise had never before that time been reveal'd unto them? So that had we no such Promise upon record, as, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head;*  
yet

yet however, we might be as sure that there was some such kind of Revelation made to *Adam*, some Promise of Forgiveness, when God did intend to Redeem him and all Mankind, as there was a Design to Redeem them: It being as necessary toward their present Comfort to have a Revelation of that Mercy in their Redemption, as Redemption it self was necessary toward their Happiness.

And this will farther be confirmed, if we consider what has been before proved in the former Discourse, "That all men have had a Sense of the Want of a Revelation; and have been possess'd with an earnest and impatient desire of obtaining it; which being a desire becoming Human Nature, useful and fit to be cherish'd, it is not to be conceiv'd, that where there is provision made to answer all sensible and natural Appetites throughout the Creation, that this no less importunate, though supervenient Desire, should have no regard paid to it, but be suffered, like *Ætna*, to be always burning within, tormenting, as it were, the Bowels of Mankind with an unquenchable Fire, or an unsatiable Desire of knowing what was not to be known, and of obtaining what was not to be obtained. This is a State that the Consideration of God's Goodness will

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not

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not admit us to suppose ; and we must therefore necessarily conclude , That the same Divine Power and Wisdom that made Man a Reasonable and Inquisitive Being, and has allowed him a World of Wonders to employ that Faculty in the Contemplation of, hath also provided for that Noble Desire of knowing what the Will of his Maker is, and what relates to his own Eternal Welfare; and that is, by a Revelation. Indeed without this, 'tis with him as with one that is born Blind, that whatever other Evidence he may have of the Being of a God, wants one of the most convincing of all, which is, The Wonders of an Almighty Power and Incomprehensible Wisdom, conspicuous in the Frame of Nature, and the visible parts of the Creation : So whatever sense men, that have only Reason for their Guide, may have of the Mercy and Goodness of God ; whatever they may observe in the Course of his Providence to confirm them in the Belief of it ; whatever Hopes they may have of it, from the general Notion of the Divine Nature ; whatever Desire they may have of it, from a sense of their own Misery, yet they want that Evidence of it, which, as we find by constant experience, alone can satisfy and compose their doubtful and distracted Minds, and that is *Certainty,*

tainy, or, which is the same, *Revelation*; by which and nothing less, That *Certainty* is to be attained. And therefore we have just reason to believe that was not wanting to the First Ages of the World: For the same reason we have to believe God to be good, the like reason we have to believe that he did after that manner make himself known in those early times from the first to Mankind.

But it may be said, What is all this Reasoning to Matter of Fact? For if after all, there has been no such Revelation, or no Proof can be made of it, That is more than a Thousand Speculative Arguments for it. And besides, supposing there was once a Revelation, what was that to those Ages and Nations that afterwards wanted it, and were condemned, as it were, to *sit in darkness, and the shadow of death*?

The last of these is not to be denied, and so I shall first of all consider it. And in answer to it it shall suffice to say for the present, That if there has been such a Revelation made known to the World, and all due care taken by the Almighty and Beneficent Creator for the Preservation of it, and it afterwards be damnified, or corrupted, or in fine, utterly lost, through the Negligence or Perverseness of men themselves, the Fault of the Miscarriage wholly rests upon them. The

making known the Revelation, was an extraordinary Case, and is a voluntary Act of Grace and Favour in Almighty God ; the Preservation of it is the ordinary Case, and belongs to Men : and when once the Extraordinary Case becomes Ordinary, God leaves it to its proper and natural Course, to Second Causes, to Human Prudence, Care, and Inspection.

Thus it is with Reason, the Noblest Principle of Human Nature, which if not attended and nurtur'd, may degenerate into Stupidity, and a kind of Brutality. As it happen'd to some Nations in the *Southern Parts of Africa*, *West-Tartary*, and *West-Indies*, that notwithstanding the Characters of an Almighty Being legibly stamp'd upon the Face of the whole and every part of the Creation, have so far degenerated, that it has been questioned, Whether they have had any Notion or Sense of a God ; or any sort of Worship for him. And so it is in the case before us : For as God had made a special Revelation of himself to *Adam* after as well as before the Fall, so he took a very effectual way for the Conveyance and Preservation of it, by the Longævity of those Patriarchs with whom it was deposited, and who were to take care that it might be preserv'd inviolable : Three of which  
alone



alone fill'd up the first Period of 1656 Years, from the Creation to the Flood ; viz. *Adam*, *Methuselah*, and *Noah* : So that *Methuselah* lived 243 Years with *Adam*, ( for so old was he when *Adam* died ; ) and *Noah* lived 600 Years with *Methuselah* ( for so old was *Noah* when *Methuselah* died, and the Flood came. ) And four again of the Fathers after the Flood (tho the Extent of their Lives was shortned ) fell in with the 856 Years from the Flood to the giving of the Law by *Moses* at *Sinai* : So that *Abraham* is well supposed to have lived 150 Years with *Shem*, *Jacob* about 20 with *Abraham*, *Levi* 60 Years with *Jacob*, and *Amram* the Father of *Moses* lived in the Time of his Grandfather *Levi*.

Now what course, in the Circumstances and the State the World was at that time in, could be more fit, if duly observed, for conveying the matter of a Revelation through the several Periods and Ages of the World, so far as Personal Teaching was sufficient ?

And especially, when the Things revealed, and after this manner to be delivered from Age to Age, were of Importance sufficient to oblige both Teacher and Scholar ; and withal so Few, as might without any Difficulty be retained. And therefore, if notwithstanding the Method taken by Almighty God for the registering what he



he had revealed, in the memories of men, and for delivering it down to future Ages, there was afterwards no care taken on their part, and no reasonable provision made for conserving such a Revelation, but that in process of time, it was either totally obliterated, or vilely corrupted, the Miscarriage was (as I have said) wholly chargeable upon such as by their Negligence or Wickedness made Mankind to sin, in not delivering, or not faithfully delivering down to Posterity what they themselves had received in its Original Purity from their Ancestors. The Case is indeed very lamentable, but what is not to be helped, without Almighty God alters the Nature of things, turns them out of their proper and ordinary Course, and acts solely by his own Power and Prerogative, either without or above the Agency of Second Causes. Which is no more with reason to be expected, than that when God has made the Earth in its own nature fertile, and capable of yielding all things necessary for man's subsistence, with Cultivation; that He should also be obliged to continue it in the same state it was created in; and when by the Sloth and Stupidity of men it brought forth nothing but Thorns and Thistles, should miraculously make every Tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food,

food, and whatever was beneficial and necessary, to grow out of the Ground, as at first, and before there was a *Man to till the ground*. Now if this be unreasonable for *Man* to expect, it is so then in the case of Revelation, which God had committed to the Custody of Men themselves, and made them whose Interest it was, to be the Conservators of it.

Having thus far considered the Case of those that had not, or have no Revelation, I shall return to the Main Point, which is, To shew that there has been such a Revelation. And that brings me to the

II<sup>d</sup>. Sort of Proof, which I call *Natural*, as it belongs to things Natural, and is opposed to what is of mere Institution, (which I conceive to be equivalent to Revelation): And they are Speech, and common Notions.

1. *Speech*: For which there is in *Man* a Natural Capacity, and Organs admirably contrived and disposed (as we see by experience.) But now there is a vast difference in that case betwixt Us and other Creatures; for other Creatures have not only Organs as we have, fitted for their proper Notes, but at once have all those Organs in Tune and in Operation; so that whatever they would signify in  
their

their way, and according to their kind, they immediately thereby express: But though the Organs of Speech in us are as exquisitely framed, yet we gradually grow up to the use of them; and again, can never apply them, or know how to use them, without some precedent Instruction. And therefore it has been the Opinion of many, That without hearing others speak, we should be eternally dumb \*; as the Experiment of *Psammeticus* King of *Egypt* shews †, ( if true ) of shutting up Two Children in separate Caves, where they never heard one Articulate Word, and so could use none.

\* *V. Postellus*, lib. de  
*Orig. c. 4.*  
† *Herodotus*, *Euterpe*, c. 2.

So that now Man must be taught, and as he is taught, so he speaks. But we will put the case in which there was no Human Instructor, and yet the Person spoke as articulately, and had the free use of Words, and knew as well how to express his mind by them from the very first, as if he had had the best Helps for it in the world, and had been never so long a time versed and practised in it; and that Person was *Adam*, who was created in a full Age, and had none before him; and yet must as soon have Words for use, and Skill how to use them, as he had to give Names to the Creatures, according to their several kinds. For without this, what Conversation could

could he have with *Eve*, or what Comfort could he take in her presence, (for it was not to be call'd Society); and what a Dejection must there be in each of them, when all other Creatures had their Notes for understanding each other, according to the Species they were of, but they themselves alone were mute. So that though 'tis not expressly said, That *Adam* and *Eve* had any Discourse; yet 'tis as certain from the reason of the thing, as it is that God spake to them, or the Serpent and *Eve* spake together. But 'tis certain *Adam* must then be self-instructed, or be instructed by God: He must then invent a Language of himself, or he must be taught by him that made him. If he was to teach himself, how could he know that he was able to speak; or how can we think he would begin his Conversation by an attempt that way? For 'tis highly probable, that they would first have began with dumb signs, or some external motions (as we see those ordinarily do, that have no Words which others can understand); or if they should at length have found out such an Expedient, and formed some Articulate Sounds, yet what a tedious course would this have been, and how long before it could be wrought into a Language, that they could first Think of Words, and then Remember them,

and then Use them, and then fall into Discourse? Don't we find how difficult it is to learn to speak a Foreign Language, when we have all Advantages for it, by Instruction and Discourse with those that speak it? But suppose Two Persons wholly strangers to one another, and of a Language as different as *Chinese* and *English*, should meet together, and be constrained by Circumstances, being without other Society, to converse with each other; though each had a Language of their own, and knew how to speak and form Words for Pronunciation, yet how long would it be before they could fix the Words for it, and to have a Term for every thing they were to discourse about; to invent and agree upon it, and then to remember them, and then to use them? And then much more will the difficulties increase, were these Two in the case of *Adam* and *Eve*, and to beat out the Track which never any walked in before; to invent Speech it self, and Words to be spoken, and sufficient to express the Thoughts of each other, so as to make Company, and that Company agreeable, acceptable, and useful. This must have been the work of Time, if it had been practicable; and the Difficulty of it would have made each others Company a Burden rather than a Pleasure, till such time

time as they could come to a mutual understanding of one anothers minds and inclinations. And therefore to make them *meet helps* for each other, it was of Necessity that they should have an extraordinary Power communicated from Heaven, and be enabled by that Instinct as soon to speak, as the other Creatures are in a course of Nature to utter such Voices as are suitable to their kind, or as Mankind are to express their Passions of Joy or Sorrow, by Laughter or Tears.

So that 'tis not without reason, I rank the Gift of Speech among those things that are of a Divine Infusion, and so equivalent to Revelation.

2. Another Instance of this kind, is what is usually called Common Notions, or Natural Impressions: *Common Notions*, because they are common to all Mankind; and *Natural Impressions*, because they are conceiv'd not to be acquired by any Human Means, such as Education and Instruction, Observation and Experience; but are imprinted on our Nature by an Immediate and Supernatural Power.

That there are such Notions as all Mankind do agree in, is undeniable; such as the Belief of a God, an Adoration to be given to him; and that there is an essential difference between Good and



Evil, so that Good cannot by any art or endeavour be made or esteemed to be Evil, nor Evil Good: For as the Natures of the things themselves cannot be altered, so neither can our Conceptions of them.

It is as undeniable, That these Notions or Impressions are so early to be discovered, and do so grow up with our Reason, that they seem not to be the Effects of our Reason, but rather to be antecedent to it; and that it is rather what we Find, than what we Chuse; what belongs to our Nature, than what we add to it. And accordingly as we have a Notion, so a Sense of those things, antecedent to all Reasoning and Instruction, which we call Conscience, *excusing or else accusing*, according to the nature of the things, whether good or evil. Now as the Nature of the things must be before our Conception of them, so both must be before we pass this practical Judgment upon them: And if we do exercise this Faculty antecedent to all Instruction, then so must the Sense of the things be, about which it is exercised. So the Apostle, *Rom. 2. 14.* *When the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing*



bearing witness, &c. Which is exactly agreeable to the Phrase of the Wisest among them ; So Aristotle calls it, the Natural, Common, and Unwritten Law.

Ad Ni-  
com. l. 4.  
c. 5. l. 5.  
c. 9. l. 8.  
c. 1.  
Rhet. l. 1.  
c. 10, 13,  
15.

But above all, Cicero (who best knew the sense of the Philosophers, and how to express it) doth speak fully to this point, both as to the Universality of these First Notions, and the agreement in them by all Mankind ; both as to the nature and rise of them. *There is, saith he, a certain Law, not written, but native to us, which we have not learned, received, nor read : But we have taken and derived it from Nature it self ; to which we were not Taught to be conformed, but Made ; it was not by Institution, but Infusion.* This, in another place, he saith all men have by a certain Anticipation, and calls them *innate Cogitations* ; and will allow it to come from no less a Power than what is Divine. *We have, saith he, received a Conscience from the Immortal Gods ; which cannot be plucked away from us.*

Pro Mi-  
lone.

L. 1. de  
Nat. Deor.  
& L. 2. de  
Legib.

Pro Clu-  
entio.

So that whatever Improvement these Notions and Impressions may receive from an after Instru-  
ction, yet they seem to be implanted in us by the same Power that made us reasonable Crea-  
tures, who no more could leave himself without Witness in our Minds, than in the Works of Na-  
ture. And being thus antecedent to our own  
Reason

Reasoning, or other Information, can proceed from no other a Principle than Revelation doth, and is therefore equivalent to it.

III. There is a Traditionary Proof of Revelation, which is by Testimony, or by such Instances as are a part of the Revelation; and of which, as I conceive, no tolerable account can be given, if they are not allowed to be of Divine Institution. In order to which,

1. I observe, That the Want of a Revelation in any particular Nation or Age, is not an Argument sufficient to prove that there never was any Revelation. For Revelation being more especially of things not knowable by the mere Light of Nature, may be lost, while the Light of Nature remains. It being in this case much as it is in Matters of History, which may be derived from one Generation to another, and especially by Registers and Memorials: But if a former Generation be careless and slothful, or the Records not faithfully wrote or kept, the Matters of Fact in one Age are irrecoverably lost in the next, or turned into Fables. Of which the Earliest Times are too manifest an Instance; and for which reason Varro did not divide them amiss, into *ἀδελον* & *μυθικον*, *obscure* or *unknown*, and *fabulous*. Which lasted till the First Olympiad, and

and that was, at soonest, *Anno Mundi* 3173; when the Historical Age, according to him, begins. Now as the want of such Histories will not prove that there never were any such, and much less that there were no Matters of Fact for the furnishing such Histories: So though there be no Revelation, or no Memorials of such a Revelation, in some particular Nations or Ages, it will not necessarily follow that there never was any such Revelation made to the World.

1. When I propose the Proof of a Revelation, I would not be understood so much as to suppose, That there was from the beginning, or before the Time of *Moses*, a Pandect or Collection of Divine Revelations; but only that there were Inspired Persons to whom God did (as occasion served) reveal himself in *sundry times and divers manners*, such as *Adam*, *Enoch*, *Noah*, &c.

3. Where there has been or is no Revelation, or pretence to it (if any such Age or People ever were) yet there are or have been in those Ages or Nations, certain Footsteps of such a Revelation; and which wherever they are found, are as evident Marks of such a Revelation, as Pillars or Crosses found in a Countrey at present uninhabited, are, that there have been some persons that have been there before, and have erected those Monuments.

4. I

4. I account such Usages, Rites, and Principles, to proceed from Revelation, that have no foundation in Reason, and the nature of the thing, but are correspondent to what we call Revelation; and which can well have no reason at all assign'd for them, if not the Reason given in that Revelation: Such are Expiatory Sacrifices, and other things relating to Divine Worship.

5. This is the more confirmed, if such Usages, Rites and Principles have been observed, practis'd, and believed, in Nations that have had no relation one to another, no Commerce or Communication, nor sometimes knowledge of one another; for then they must arise from some common Head, from whence they were aboriginally dispersed among the several Branches of the same Stock.

When one People has been mixed with another, as the *Jews* and *Egyptians*; or derived from another, as the *Colchi* from the *Egyptians*; or there have been Commerces and Confederacies, Wars and Conquests, 'tis no wonder they intermingle in several Rites and Observances. Of this we have a notorious Instance in Circumcision, which by the abovesaid means came to be received by several Nations, as the *Ethiopians*, *Egyptians*, and *Colchi*, the *Phœnicians*, and some of the

the Syrians, as *Herodotus* shews \*. But when the Usages, Rites, and Principles have been as well found where there has been no Communication, as where there has; 'tis no less a sign they descend from one and the same Original, than when the Waters of the Seven Branches of the River *Nilus* have one and the same Taste and Colour, without any Communication, that they do all descend from the Main Stream.

\* *Clio.*  
cap. 36,  
37 *Enterp.*  
cap. 104.  
V *Bochart*  
*Geogr.*  
*Sacr. Ph.*  
*leg. l. 4.*  
c. 31.

In like manner, if we find, suppose, among the Seventy Nations (into which 'tis said Mankind was divided, upon the Confusion at *Babel*) several of the same Rites and Usages, generally speaking, concurring with those of what we call Revelation, we must conclude, That they were observed before that Dispersion, and were wholly owing to as early an Institution.

Among the Instances that I shall make use of for the Proof of a Revelation, I shall begin with those that relate to Divine Worship, such as Time, Sacrifices, &c.

1. *Time.* That there is some particular Portion of Time to be set apart for the Publick Worship of God, either by Divine Appointment, or Humane Consent, is absolutely necessary, when it is to be the Act of a Society; for Worship, without some time for such Society to

D

convene

convene and assemble in, must inevitably end in Confusion and Dissolution.

And therefore as God created the World as a Temple to exhibit and manifest himself in, and created such Beings as should in their several Stations celebrate his Praise ; so when he had finished all his Work, he established that Day which he rested upon, to be from thenceforward devoted to that Service ; as we may see the Institution, *Gen. 2. 2.* I call this an Institution ; for when could that be more seasonably instituted by Divine Authority, than at the Close of the Creation, when the Sanctification and the Reason of it were so immediately connected ; *God blessed and sanctified it, because in it he had rested from all his work ?* It being not probable that there should be at that time no Institution, when the Reason for it is expressly given ; or that there should be no present Obligation to observe it, when there was an Institution. If God had no sooner finished his Work, but he *sanctified* the Day following, 'tis evident that the Obligation to observe it must begin with the Institution : And if he *sanctified* it, because on that Day he *rested*, 'tis as evident the Institution did begin with the Reason of it. And then how improbable is it that God should *bles*s and *sanctify* a Particular Day,



Day, and yet for the space of Two thousand Years together should leave that Day in common with the other Days of the Week, without any distinction? How improbable again, that it should be first instituted and made a Duty to the *Jews* only for a Reason that equally concerned all Mankind as well as them, because he *rested*; and for a reason existent from the first, as well as in the time when it was instituted at *Sinai*? 'Tis highly unreasonable to add one *Prolepsis* to another, and to heap Figure upon Figure, when there is no necessity for it, contrary to all the Rules of a Just Interpretation.

Now if this be an Original and Primæval Institution, we have one Instance of a Divine Revelation, so far as the Scripture is of Authority; and surely we may demand in its behalf, to have as much regard paid to it as we give to Prophane Histories.

But however, we are not without a concurrent Testimony from them also in this particular. For it is manifest that there hath been of great Antiquity such a Distribution of Time as we call a Week of Seven Days; and which is more to our purpose, That the Seventh Day was a Festival and Religious Day. This *Lucian* doth more than intimate; and long before him, *Solon*,



\* Præpar.  
l. 13. c. 12,  
p. 667

who calls it *Most Holy Day*, in his *Elegies*, quoted by *Eusebius* \* ; and one earlier than he, *Homer*, who calls it, ἱερὴν ἡμέραν, *The Holy Day*. But *Calimachus*, *Homer*, and *Linus*, are still more particular, for they say it was because all the Works of Creation were then finished. So *Homer*, Ἐβδόμῃν ἡμέρῃν καὶ τῷ τετέλεστο ἅπαντα ; and 'tis therefore called by *Linus*, *The Birth-day of the World*.

Now there is nothing in Nature to point to this ; for there is no more to be observed from the Motion of the Heavens for such a Septenary distribution of Time, or Division into Weeks, than there is for the dividing of a Day into Hours : And consequently it must proceed from some Institution, and from a very early Institution, because of what I have observed from the fore-cited Authors, who are of great Antiquity, especially *Homer* and *Linus* : For *Homer* is supposed to have lived in or about the time of *Saul*, in the Year of the World 2940, and *Linus* in the time of the *Judges*, about the Year 2570. The consideration of which doth make it probable, that these Ancient Poets owed their Information to the general Tradition of the World, rather than to the *Jews*. Indeed *Aristobulus* the *Jew*, from whom *Eusebius* drew the abovesaid Testimonies, saith, these Poets had borrowed them from

from the *Jewish Books*. But if it be consider'd how little the *Jewish Books*, the *Scriptures*, were known to the World before the Translation of them by the *Seventy* into *Greek*, which was about 300 Years before the Birth of our Saviour; or how little the *Opinions* of the *Jews* themselves before the *Captivity* were known abroad, it will hardly be conceived, that these things should be known so early, and spoke of so positively by the *Greek Poets*, *Homer* and *Linus*, within so short a time after the Institution of the Sabbath at *Sinai*, as these two lived; for *Linus* must have lived within less than half an hundred Years after the time of *Moses*; and *Homer* in less than 400. Where if we take the lowest term, that of *Homer*, the *Jews* were hardly in a settled State, and no more in a Condition, than they were disposed in their Temper, or permitted by their Religion, to inform other Nations in the Articles or Mysteries of their Religion. So that it seems very evident, that the Observation of the Seventh day for the Service of God, was an ancient and general Opinion, and especially of those who may be best presumed to understand what had been the sense of Mankind in the Ages before, or those in which they lived. And if this was the  
Opinion

vid: Euseb. i. 6.  
p. 664. 2.

Opinion of those early Times, conformable to the History of Scripture, we have sufficient reason to offer this as an Instance of a Revelation.

2. Another instance of Revelation is Sacrifices; and especially those of Expiation. Amongst all the Rites and Usages relating to Divine Worship, there are none that exceed these in their Antiquity (except the Sabbath) or Extent.

For we no sooner read of God's Reconciliation to Mankind, but that they offer'd Sacrifice; no sooner of Noah's Deliverance and Escape out of the Deluge, but he offer'd Sacrifice: And without doubt, as it begun, so it continued, and was as much dispersed and observed among Mankind before the Flood, as after it. But how probable soever it is, that this Rite was thus universally observed before, yet That we are not so certain of, as we are of the Observation of it after the Flood, when there was no Age nor Nation where it was not to be found, how dispersed soever they were; of which no tolerable Account is to be given, unless it be allowed to have been in use before the Dispersion at *Babel*, and that it was of Divine Institution. It must have been, I say, in use before that Dispersion;  
for

for how could all Nations fall into one and the same Practice, and have the same Opinion of Sacrifices, when there is nothing in the Nature of the thing to lead them to it, if it had not been, that they had all descended from *one Blood*, from one Family, from one Body; by which means it was conveyed into all the several Branches issuing from it, and went along with them where ever they went.

Now the question is, Whence this should arise, and what gave it this universal Acceptance and Authority? whether the Invention of some Eminent Persons, suppose, in those early Times? or whether it was by Revelation from God, and of his special Institution?

There seems no great reason to think this Service should proceed merely from the Invention of Men, even of those pious and well-disposed Persons, since (as I have said) there is nothing in the nature of the thing to lead to it. For how could it be supposed that this should be acceptable to Almighty God, which in it self holds no Conformity, nor is at all suitable to his Nature? *Will I eat the flesh of bulls, and drink the blood of goats?* Psal. 50. 13. is a true representation of it.

It might become a sanguinary sort of Demons, or false Gods, and wicked Spirits, to be pleased

pleased with the Fumes and Reakings of the Bleeding Sacrifice, as the Heathens generally thought: But men of any understanding would rather chuse a *reasonable Service* for the God that made them reasonable Creatures, and might presume another sort of Sacrifice would be more acceptable to him than this, and acceptable without it, *viz.* a Sacrifice of Praise and Prayer, of a pure Mind, and a good Life, which the wiser Heathens did in their Opinion exceedingly prefer. But as for the Sacrifices and Blood of Beasts, such Philosophers as *Pythagoras* and *Plato* spoke of them often with regret and displeasure; and others wonder'd how they first came into the World, as *Porphyry*, that wrote expressly against them.

Euseb.  
Præpar.

μεν ἀπο-  
ρίσ.  
lib. 2.  
Sect. 58.

What Expression could thereby be given, suppose, of mens gratitude to God for their Being, and their Preservation? *Who of all Mankind is so stupidly credulous, so foolish, that can think the Gods delighted with such a present of Bones, Gall, and Blood, which a hungry Dog would scarcely touch; and that they should repay the favour to those that offer it?* said an ancient Heathen Poet, cited by *Porphyry*.

But if we descend to Expiatory Sacrifices, who could think that the Blood of Bulls and of Goats could take away sin, and that God would accept of that as a fit Compensation for their Crimes;  
the

the Blood of a Brute for that of a Man, the Life of one that is not in its own power, instead of him that was ?

And if men were so weak as of their own accord to offer it ; can we think the Almighty Creator would accept of what was for it self only unbecoming his Majesty, and be so highly delighted with it, as to testify his Acceptance of *Abel's* by the descent of a Miraculous Fire to consume it ; and to *smell a sweet savour* upon *Noah's* Oblation ; to appoint it as a sign of his Covenant with *Abraham* ; and lastly, to embody it into the *Mosaical* Institution ?

*εναντίον.*  
So *Theodo-*  
*tion.*

It was enough, one would think, that the Majesty of Heaven and Earth hath accepted of the good will of the first Inventors, how poor and low soever the Invention was ; but it was too great a Condescension to do by these as the Heathens by their Heroes, to translate them into the number of their Deities ; too much to have such a Mark of the Favour of Heaven, as none of the Divine Institutions could have more.

But why should we think so meanly of those *Antediluvian* Patriarchs, of *Adam* and *Abel*, *Enoch* and *Noah*, &c. the first Inventors or Encouragers of this way of Worship ? At this rate happier far were the Inventions of *Adah*, *Jubal*, and *Tubal-*

E

*Cain,*



*Cain*, that taught others how to order Cattel, to handle the Harp and the Organ, to work in  
Gen 4. 20. Brass and Iron; for these did serve either the Necessities or Pleasures of Mankind, and were suitable to their nature and condition: But to offer Bestial Sacrifices to an Infinite Spirit, was as if we should present Mankind with the Entertainments and Pleasures of the Brutes; and so it cannot be thought that Men (how low soever their Understandings were) would think the Blood of Beasts a decent Present to their Creator, which indeed would not be so to their Superiors here.

But we have another sort of Character of those Holy Men, who were Persons of great Knowledge and vast Experience; who both received their Religion from the Almighty, were the great Props and Stays of it in their Generation, and to whom the care of transmitting it to Posterity was committed; and for which reason, as well as others, God seemed to have protracted their Lives to so vast an Extent. They were such as were eminent for their Piety; as *Abel's* Faith is one of the renowned Instances, *Heb. 11.* and *Enoch* is said to *walk with God*, and was in an extraordinary way rewarded for it. Such again were they as were endued with the Spirit



Spirit of Prophecy, as *Adam*, *Abel*, *Enoch*,  
*Noah*.

*Gen. 4. 25.*

*Gen. 9. 26.*

*Jude 14.*

*2 Pet. 2. 5.*

And therefore it cannot in reason be supposed that ever they should think the offering the Blood, and burning the Flesh of a Beast, to be a fit expression of their Gratitude to Almighty God, or a means to obtain his Favour by way of Expiation for their Sins, without his Institution.

It is then (as far as I conceive) evident, that Sacrifices, of what kind soever, were not invented by men. But if they were not invented by men, How came they to be admitted, and at last so much to obtain in the world?

I answer, They were of God's own Institution; and therefore were received by the Patriarchs, and accepted by himself.

But then it may reasonably be demanded, Why they should be thus honoured by a Divine Legislation and Authority, when it is allowed that they are in themselves not suitable to his Nature?

I answer, They were instituted as those Sacrifices were Typical, and had respect to a greater Sacrifice, that of Christ. And therefore 'tis observable, That as Almighty God for the Comfort of *Adam*, and preventing his Despair, (as has been before

Gen. 3. & 4. shewed ) did immediately after his Expostulation with him , and Sentence pass'd upon him, reveal his intention to pardon him , and the Means by which it was to be procured and ratified, *The Seed of the Woman*: so in consequence of this , and to shew their Faith in that Promise, we read in the next Chapter, of their Sacrifices and Offerings which they brought unto the Lord, as a Representation of what they for their Apostacy had deserved, and should have suffered, had not the Divine Mercy interposed.

Now if we have represented this aright, we have a fair account of an Expiatory Sacrifice, and how it came to take such place among men, and to be so universally received.

We have a reason again how and why it came to be framed into the Law of *Moses* ; and why those Sacrifices and the Rites belonging to them, were made a principal part of it , and have thereby a Key to unlock many Mysteries in that Law, and to answer many Difficulties about it, when it is a *shadow of good things to come*.

By this means again we come to understand the special Providence of God, that this was so much preserved and so universally dispersed and received among mankind.

By this means again we have a fair account how the Doctrine of the Cross, and the Notion of our Saviour's Death as an Expiatory Sacrifice, came to be soon entertained among the *Gentiles*; for being of God's Institution, as he preserved it, so being thus preserved, it became an excellent introduction, and prepared Mankind for the belief and reception of our Redemption by Christ.

To the same Original may the First-Fruits, Priesthood, and Tents be referr'd; the first of which was observed from the time of *Abel*, *Gen. 4.* *Gen. 14. 18. 20.* and the two last long before the time of the *Mosaical Law*; and therefore are to be derived from an ancient Institution.

But because it may be thought these Instances may be liable to exception, forasmuch as they are sometimes disputed among those themselves that do contend for a Revelation, I shall proceed to

IV. Sort of evidence, which is Supernatural; and that is either it self a Revelation, or the Proof of it; of the former is Prophecy; of the latter, Miracles.

1. Prophecy, or the foretelling of things to come; whatever time they are to exist in, near or remote. I add this latter Clause to it, to prevent all Exception, and to distinguish Prophecy truly so called, from Sagacity, or Human Provi-

Providence ; which from Precedent Observations and proximate Causes, may be often fortunate in its Conjectures or Predictions. But now as to Infinite Power all things are alike possible and easy, and there is nothing great or little, more or less, with respect to it ; so to Infinite Knowledge, to which *one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*, all things, the remotest as well as nearest, are alike present ; and there is nothing distant or near with respect to it. And therefore wherever the true Spirit of Prophecy is, the same Power that can foretell what shall happen to morrow, could, if he so pleased, as easily foretell what shall happen a Thousand Years hence ; *since all things are alike naked and opened unto him with whom we have to do*. Now this sort of Knowledge can proceed from nothing less than him, who as he knows all things, so has all Causes in his own Power, and can foresee how they will operate, and what shall be the Event of such Operations, or can dispose them to it as he pleaseth, whatever the Causes be, whether (as we usually say) they are Voluntary, Necessary, or Contingent ; and being thus peculiar to him, and his sole Privilege, 'tis no less than a Species of Divine Revelation. And therefore as none can know  
the

the Certainty of such Futurities and Events but God ; so none can foretell them but such as he is pleased to reveal them to. From whence it was that *Plato* somewhere calls Prophecy, *ὑγιαινωσία*, a *Communication* or *Fellowship* with God. For suppose now we should set before us any *Epocha* or Character of Time, which the Prophecy respects ; the 160 Years from *Isaiab's* naming of *Cyrus*, to his Decree for building *Jerusalem*, *Isa.* 44. 28. Or the 350 Years from the Prophet's naming *Josiah*, to the time he defiled those Idolatrous Places, *1 Kings* 13. 1. *2 Kings* 23. 16. Or the 490 Years in *Daniel's* Weeks, from his time to the Death of *Messiah* *Dan.* 9. 2. 4. What an infinite number of intercurrent Passages must there be before it be brought in its proper season to its accomplishment ? And how amazing a sight would it be, if we could lay our hand upon the Clue of the Prophecy at its first setting out, and follow it, making its way through all Oppositions and Interferings, to the last Period and Completion ! But then if we turn our Thoughts to the chief Subject of Revelation, the Prophecy of the Incarnation of our Saviour, as it began immediately upon the Fall, and passed along through the 61 Generations, for 4000 Years together, it would be like the dispersed  
Parts

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Parts of a Human Body, to the Time and State of the Resurrection, that are carried safe and entire through all Transformations; and at last when the *Sea and the Grave* are called upon to give up their dead, all the Atoms and Particles are recalled from their several Vehicles or Tribes they were joined to, and fall into the same Composition as before in this present state. Much such a Subject have we before us, which after various Windings and Turnings, and an Infinite Succession of Causes and Events; we read, *That it might be fulfilled---and as it was spoken by the mouth of the holy Prophets, which have been since the world began,* Luk. 1. 70.

So that as many Prophecies as we have, or the world ever had, so many Evidences have we of a Supernatural and Divine Revelation.

And this all Mankind have had a belief of, as is manifest from the Oracles they consulted upon all emergent occasions; many of which were very ancient, as *Herodotus* tells us that of *Jupiter Hammon* in *Lybia* was. I acknowledge that these were full of Imposture, and were despised for it by the Wiser part of the Heathens, such as *Tully*, (*Lib. 1, 2. de Divinat.*) and detected, as *Eusebius* shews, (*Præpar. Evang. l. 4. Init. & l. 9. c. 5.*)

And



And I mention these, not that I esteem them of any Authority ; rather the contrary ; but to shew what the World thought of Prophecy, and that even those Philosophers who diverted themselves with the Mistakes and Impostures of their own Oracles, never questioned whether ever there were any true Prophecy ; but always allowed it, and took it for granted.

So that the Impostures of their own Pretenders never engaged them so far, as to call in question the Veracity of all Prophecy , or to deny it where it was able to justify it self.

2. Sort of Supernatural Evidence, is Miracles. But of that , God willing , I shall Discourse afterwards.

Thus far I have endeavoured to shew , That there has been a Revelation, antecedent to , or where there was no Written Revelation : And the Arguments and Instances have been such as were proper to those Circumstances ; such as we are led to by the Light of Nature, and Human Observation : And therefore though they receive Light and Confirmation from a Written Revelation, are not supposed to depend upon it for their Evidence. And if this Point has been hereby made out and proved, we then find that

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God has at sundry times and in divers manners, revealed himself to mankind by the *Prophets* and inspired Persons, from the beginning through the *Ante-diluvian* and *Post-diluvian* Times, till the Promulgation of a Written Law by *Moses*.

If it be said, That these are far from amounting to a Certainty, and from giving us an Infallible Assurance of a Revelation, since some of them are disputed even among those that own a Revelation; as the Original of the Sabbath, and Sacrifices; and at the most are but Probable Arguments.

1. I answer, Probability is a fair Step to Certainty; and I may after all affirm, That the Account here offered is the best that can be given of those Instances:

1. There are such Arguments as are taken from the Consideration of God's Nature; and there cannot be a stronger, than what is fetch'd from the nature of things.

2. There are other Instances that are equivalent to a Revelation, and can proceed from no lower a Principle; such are Speech and Common Notions; the former of which in the Circumstances before recited, must be from Divine Inspiration, and the latter from a Divine Impression.

4. There

4. There are those things which when they accompany what we call a Revelation, prove the Truth and Certainty of it; and being recorded in a Written Revelation, become of the Body of it, and they are Miracles.

5. There are others that are the Matter of Revelation, and they are Prophecies, especially such as are carried along in a continued Train, and mutually confirm each other.

6. There are others that are not only consonant to what we own to be a Revelation, but to Human Testimonies; and being confirmed by both, are of great Authority.

All which laid together, give us, I may say, unquestionable Evidence, That there has been a Revelation, or that God has made himself and his Will known to the World by Persons chosen out, and inspired, and commissioned by him.

And this is a good Preparative and Introduction for what is to follow, *viz.* That there is a special Revelation, and that Revelation recorded and transmitted by Writing to the World; which is a Point in Reserve, and that will in order be discoursed of.

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